

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 EA-12 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 MCE-00
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NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00
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ARA:GLISTER (TEL)
EA:FBENNETT (TEL)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION URGES ARMS CUTOFF
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1. THE COALITION FOR A NEW FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICY
MARCH 22 URGED A CUTOFF OF ARMS AID TO COUNTRIES WITH
PERCEIVED HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS. DEPARTMENT IS POUCHING
TO POSTS TEXT OF FULL COALITION STATEMENT TOGETHER WITH
HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS ON EACH COUNTRY PROVIDED BY COALITION.
TEXT OF ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN MARCH 23 WASHINGTON

POST BY STAFF WRITER JOHN M. GOSKO UNDER TITLE QUOTE
HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION URGES ARMS AID CUT OFF END QUOTE
FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT A COALITION OF ACTIVIST HUMAN-RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS CALLED ON CONGRESS YESTERDAY TO CUT OFF OR DRASTICALLY REDUCE U.S. MILITARY AID TO 13 COUNTRIES THE COALITION SAYS ABUSE THE RIGHTS OF THEIR CITIZENS.

THE COALITION WAS ESPECIALLY CRITICAL OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S PLANS TO CONTINUE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND SALES TO IRAN, THE PHILIPPINES, NICARAGUA AND INDONESIA.

BY JUSTIFYING AID TO THESE COUNTRIES ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY, THE COALITION SAYS THE ADMINISTRATION RUNS THE RISK OF UNDERMINING THE SAID, THE ADMINISTRATION RUNS THE RISK OF UNDERMINING THE CREDIBILITY OF ITS OWN CHAMPIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE ORGANIZATION, THE COALITION FOR A NEW FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICY, IS COMPOSED OF LIBERAL CHURCH, POLITICAL AND OTHER GROUPS ACTIVE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD.

THE OTHER TARGETS OF ITS CRITICISM WERE BANGLADESH, BOLIVIA, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, HAITI, MOROCCO, PARAGUAY, SOUTH KOREA, THAILAND AND TUNISIA. IT MADE PUBLIC ITS UNCLASSIFIED

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"CRITIQUES" OF THE HUMAN-RIGHTS STATUS REPORTS PREPARED RECENTLY BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON 13 COUNTRIES.

THE REPORTS WERE COMMENDED FOR SHOWING "VAST IMPROVEMENTS" OVER THE DEPARTMENT'S EFFORTS THE PREVIOUS YEAR, BUT THE COALITION SAID THEY STILL ARE MARRED BY OMISSIONS, DISTORTIONS AND MISLEADING INFORMATION THAT APPEAR AIMED AT PORTRAYING THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE 13 COUNTRIES IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT.

IN A LETTER TO SEN. JOHN J. SPARKMAN (D-ALA.), CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, THE COALITION SAID THE DEPARTMENT HAD "A TENDENCY TO UNDERESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THE FREQUENCY OF TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL PUNISHMENT."

IT ADDED: "WE BELIEVE THAT A REDUCTION OR TERMINATION OF MILITARY AID AND SALES TO ALL 13 OF THESE COUNTRIES IS JUSTIFIED."

IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S MILITARY AID PROPOSALS FOR THE 1979 FISCAL YEAR, THE ONLY COUNTRY MARKED FOR A SIGNIFI-

CANT CUTBACK OF MILITARY AID IN NICARAGUA. AS THE
COALITION NOTED, THE OTHERS ARE SLATED TO CONTINUE
RECEIVING ASSISTANCE OR THE RIGHT TO PURCHASE U.S.
WEAPONRY AT ROUGHLY THE SAME LEVELS AS IN PAST YEARS.

AT A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY, COALITION LEADERS
PROMISED A VIGOROUS EFFORT TO LOBBY CONGRESS IN PURSUIT
OF AID REDUCTIONS TO THESE COUNTRIES. REP. THOMAS R.
HARKIN (D-IOWA), WHO HAS SPONSORED SEVERAL HUMAN-RIGHTS
AMENDMENTS IN RECENT YEARS, APPEARED AT THE PRESS
CONFERENCE TO PLEDGE HIS SUPPORT IN THIS DRIVE.

AMONG THE ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE COALITION
ARE AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION, THE UNITED METHODIST
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CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, FRIENDS COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONAL LEGISLATION, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES,
THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA AND CLERGY AND
LAITY CONCERNED. END TEXT
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